Dear Honorable Members of Education Committee:

My name is Nora Xu, I came from China and now I am living at Glastonbury, CT. I am writing to testify in regard of bill No. SB359 “Prohibiting the Disaggregation of Student Data by Ethnic or Racial Subgroups in the Public School Information System”.

I support the original concept of “prohibiting educational institutions or other state agencies from mandatory collection and separation of data from students by subpopulations of national origin or ethnicity”, because separating people by ethnic or racial subgroups will hurt the US nation interest in the long term, which would be extremely harmful to this country; furthermore it won't solve the issue of how to provide better education for all of Connecticut's residents at all.

People who support disaggregation of student data by ethnic or racial subgroups always like to emphasize that the resource of education is limited then followed by the data: According to U.S. Census data, 37.9 % of Hmong, 37.4 % of Cambodians and 33.8 % of Laotians have less than a high school diploma. Only 14.7% of Hmong have a bachelor's degree or higher, 14.2 % of Cambodians, and 12.4 % of Lao. Compare these statistics to Asian Indians, where only 8.8 % lack high school diplomas and 71.1 % have college degrees, or Taiwanese, where only 8.8 % lack high school diplomas and 74.1 % have college degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Educational Attainment for Asian-American Sub-Groups, 2008-2010). Then they gave the conclusion that this disaggregated data demonstrates the disparities appear in education and these kind of data would help to drive the policy and shape the allocation of resources to delivery of educational services to all ethnic group.

Is this conclusion correct based on the data they used? Will the re-shape of the allocation of resources by this ethnic/racial subgroups based disaggregation data solve the current issue in the education? The answer is: NO!

First, let's look at the limited resource that they are talking about. Up to 2015, the population of the US is 321 million and only about 21 million is Asian America, which means the Asian America is only about 6.54% among all US population. How much of the education resource could be allocated to this 6.54% population in total? Do you really think simply by re-shape the allocation within such limited resource would satisfy the need of whole Asian American community? The answer is: NO! The only result would be depriving already very limited resource from one part of Asian Americans and give it to the other part which they thought the reason of their high rate of school dropping is simply due to short of resource. So they "solve"
the issue by limiting the resource to part of Asian Americans to make that ethnic subgroup to become a new "high rate of school dropping" society!

Second, do those ethnic subgroups, such as India and Taiwanese, have higher college degree ratio simply due to they grabbed more education resource from other racial subgroups? The answer is: NO! In a recently research on the public education conducted by economists at the University of Chicago and Harvard in a school at Chicago Heights, the study result shows that even under the same education resource condition, different racial subgroups from African-American, Asian-American, and Latino-American, do show a very different results on the education output. The family, or the education concept, really have a huge impact on the result of the public school education. To solve this issue, they perform the Parent Academy which did work really well. "These are bigger effects than almost any educational policy that is put into place." (http://freakonomics.com/podcast/early-education-rebroadcast/) This result actually could partially explain why India or Taiwanese community has higher ratio of college degree. In these ethnic subgroups, education is very important for them. No matter if they are rich or poor, they will put a lot of efforts on their kid's education even when they are so poor that they almost have no money to feed themselves. There are many examples of how poor Chinese family works so hard just in order to make enough money to let their kids could keep studying at school. On another words, if the whole family only earn $1, they could save 85 cents for their kid's education. However, unfortunately, the current bill of disaggregation of student data is equal to punish these family by depriving their 85 cents because of their hard working.

After addressed that the disaggregation of students data by ethnic or racial subgroups in the public school information system won't help solve current issues in the public education, we should take a close look on what it will bring to us.

To shape the allocation of very limited education resource based on ethnic or racial subgroups is like solving the limited banana supplying issue for a group of monkeys in the zoo by taking away some monkeys' banana to feed the others. In the end, it is not only create more hungry monkeys but also make they fight to each other for food. This scene is already happened. Although it is sugarcoated as "All students count", it will not only destroy the justice and equality in our education system that people who really need help won't be able to get their resource, but also it releases a dangerous signal of allowing racial discrimination in this country. Throughout history, people had suffered in various ways due to registry of Ancestry nation of origin and ethnic origin. We don't ever want policy based on ethnicity or immigration origin which most of the time meant well, but can lead to discrimination and cause harm.
However, I am very concerned in regard of this portion of the current bill language “unless ... collected uniformly across the entire population of students”. I believe the entire population shall not be subject to registry of ancestry immigration nation of origin or ethnicity origin.

Please modify the bill language as to “No population of students shall be subject to data collection of ancestry nation of origin and ethnicity origin”. Please vote for bill SB359.

We all would like to offer helps on education for those who needed, but we definitely need a better way.

Best regards,

Nora Xu

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